

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, KS, KN

SUBJ: SIXTH RED CROSS TALKS

REF: SEOUL 2960

SUMMARY: AT PRESS CONFERENCE MAY 11 FOLLOWING DEPARTURE OF NORTH KOREAN RED CROSS DELEGATION FROM SEOUL, KNRC CHIEF DELEGATE YI BUM- SUK SAID THE TALKS MADE NO PROGRESS. HOWEVER, HE THOUGHT EACH SIDE BETTER APPRECIATED THE OTHER'S POSITION AND HE PERCEIVED SLIGHT SHIFT BY NORTH TOWARD SOUTH'S POSITION ON METHOD OF IMPLEMENTING FAMILY SEARCH. END SUMMARY.

FOLLOWING IS EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF TEXT OF PRESS CONFERENCE BY KOREAN NATIONAL RED CROSS (KNRC) CHIEF DELEGATE YI BUM- SUK MAY 11.

BEGIN TEXT.

(OPENING STATEMENT)

IN ORDER TO PROMOTE FRUITFUL PROGRESS OF THE SOUTH- NORTH RED CROSS TALKS, WE HAVE EXERTED SINCERE EFFORTS TO MAKE THE NORTH KOREAN SIDE UNDERSTAND THE CORRECTNESS OF OUR PROPOSAL. BECAUSE UNCLASSIFIED

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THE NORTH KOREAN SIDE STUBBORNLY REPEATED ITS OLD DEMAND THAT SO- CALLED LEGAL AND SOCIAL OBSTACLES MUST FIRST BE ELIMINATED, THE TALKS MADE NO PROGRESS. ENCOURAGED BY THE EXPECTATION OF THE PEOPLE WHO WORDLESSLY WATCH OUR RECURRING MEETINGS WE PLEDGE TO EXERT OUR UTMOST SINCERITY AND EFFORT FOR THIS CAUSE.

QUESTION: HAS THERE BEEN ANY PROGRESS COMPARED WITH THE FIFTH RED CROSS TALKS IN NARROWING THE GAP BETWEEN THE BASIC POSITIONS OF THE TWO SIDES?

ANSWER: THERE WAS LITTLE PROGRESS IN NARROWING THE GAP, BUT I THINK THE MEETING HELPED BOTH SIDES TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE THE OTHER ATTACHES TO ITS POSITION.

QUESTION: WHAT PROGRESS WAS MADE IN DISCUSSING THE SCOPE OF FAMILY AND RELATIVES?

ANSWER: NONE AT ALL. THEY STILL INSIST THAT THE FACT OF RELATIONSHIP SHOULD BE DECIDED BY THE PERSON WHO IS SEEKING A MISSING RELATIVE, WHILE WE SAY IT SHOULD BE DECIDED BY THE PERSON BEING SOUGHT.

QUESTION: DID YOU DISCUSS CONCRETE MEANS FOR CONFIRMING THE ADDRESS OF THOSE BEING SOUGHT AND WHETHER THEY ARE DEAD OR ALIVE?

ANSWER: I THINK WE MADE A LITTLE PROGRESS ON THE MATTER OF LOCATING. WE PROPOSED THAT THE RED CROSS SHOULD DO THE FINDING AND NOTIFYING BY MEANS OF FORMS SUBMITTED BY THOSE SEEKING INFORMATION. THE NORTH PROPOSED TO HAVE FREE TRAVEL FOR THOSE SEEKING RELATIVES. HOWEVER, THIS TIME THE NORTH KOREAN DELEGATES STATED THAT " INDIRECT AND SUPPLEMENTAL MEANS MAY BE ADOPTED IN ADDITION TO CONFIRMATION BY FREE TRAVEL." THUS WE GET THE IMPRESSION THAT THEIR PROPOSAL IS GETTING CLOSER TO OURS.

QUESTION: WHY DOES THE NORTH KOREAN RED CROSS SEEM TO BE CREATING DEADLOCK BY LEADING THE TALKS OUTSIDE THE AREA OF RED CROSS BUSINESS?

ANSWER: THEIR PURPOSE IS BEYOND MY UNDERSTANDING. IT IS TRUE
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THAT THEY HAVE RAISED SUBJECTS WHICH ARE NOT PURE RED CROSS BUSINESS. I WOULD RATHER NOT ANSWER FURTHER.

QUESTION: WHAT WAS SAID ON THE QUESTION OF CREATING A FAVORABLE ENVIRONMENT, WHICH HAS BEEN A PROBLEM SINCE THE THIRD CONFERENCE?

ANSWER: THE NORTH INSISTED THAT LEGAL AND SOCIAL OBSTACLES

SHOULD BE ELEIMINATED, BUT WE CONTENDED THAT SUCH MATTERS WERE NOT SUITABLE FOR DISCUSSION AT A RED CROSS MEETING AND ACCORD-INGLY TRIED TO PERSUADE THEM TO WITHDRAW THEIR DEMAND. OF COURSE, THEY REPEATED THAT DEMAND THIS TIME. WE REPLIED BY EXPLAINING THAT THE BASIC POLICY OF TH ROK WAS TO GIVE POSITIVE SUPPORT TO THE EXECUTION OF ALL PROJECTS MUTAULLY AGREED UPON AT THE RED CROSS TALKS. IN OTHER WORDS, IT MAY BE SAID THAT THE PROSPECT OF THE TALKS IS SOMEWHAT DIM AS LONG AS THEY DO NOT WITHDRAW THEIR STUBBORN DEMAND WHICH CONFLICTS WITH THE HUMAN-TARIAN PRINCIPLES OF THE RED CROSS.

QUESTION: WE HEAR THAT THE NORTH KOREAN RED CROSS PROPOSED TO DESPATCH " ENLIGHTENMENT OFFICIALS" TO THE OTHER SIDE. DID YOU DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT THIS TIME?

ANSWER: WE HAVE ASKED THEM SEVERAL TIMES TO EXPLAIN WHAT THEY MEAN BY THIS PROPOSAL. THIS TIME THEY MADE CLEAR THAT THERE SHOULD BE ONE " OFFICIAL FOR UNDERSTANDING AND EXPLANATION" FOR EACH VILLAGE IN SOUTH KOREA, ALTOGETHER 35,997. WE WOULD SEND A CORRESPONDING NUMBER TO THE NORTH.

QUESTION: WHY IS THE SEVENTH RED CROSS MEETING SCHEDULED FOR MONTH AFTER NEXT?

ANSWER: WE DID NOT DEVOTE A LOT OF ATTENTION TO THE DATE OF THE SEVENTH MEETING. I UNDERSTAND THAT BOTH SIDES AVOIDED JUNE BECAUSE THERE WILL BE A COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING IN JUNE.
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